2021

AP® CollegeBoard

AP® Music Theory

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free Response Question 5

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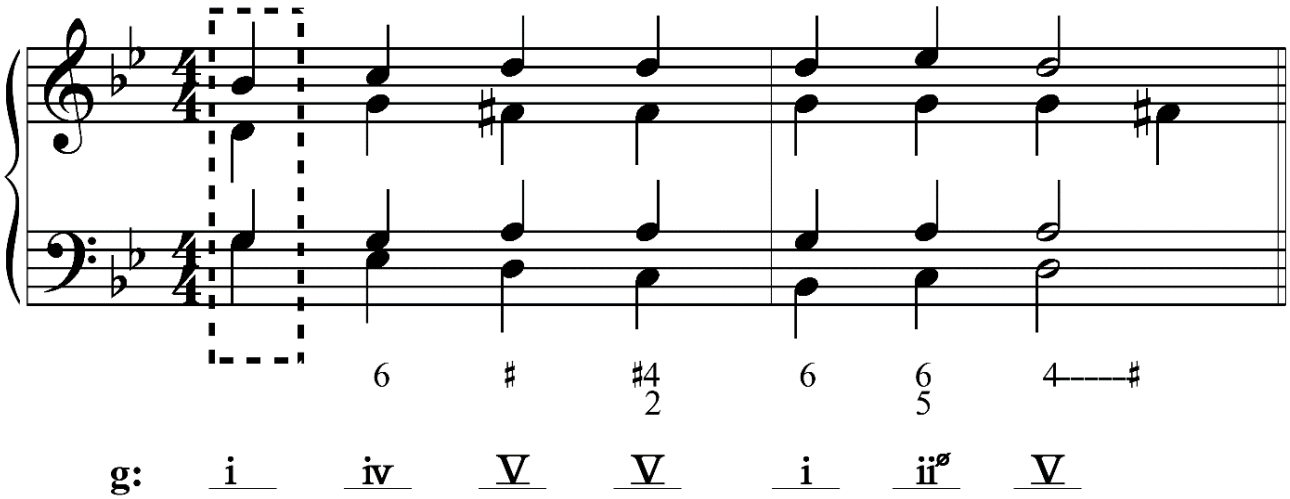
Question 5: Part-writing from figured bass — 25 points

One possible 25-point answer (others are possible):



I. Roman Numerals

Award 1 point for each correct Roman numeral. **1 point per numeral (max 7)**

1. Accept the correct Roman numeral regardless of its case.
2. Ignore any Arabic numerals because they are included in the question itself.
3. Award no credit if an accidental is placed *before* a Roman numeral.

II. Chord Spelling, Spacing, and Doubling

A. Award 1 point for each chord that correctly realizes the given figured bass. **1 point per chord (max 6)**

1. The chord must be spelled correctly. A missing accidental will be considered a misspelling. An incorrect accidental on the wrong side of the notehead will also be considered a misspelling.
2. The fifth (but *not* the *third*) may be omitted from any root-position triad.
3. The fifth (but *not* the *third* or *seventh*) may be omitted from a root-position dominant seventh chord.
4. All inverted triads and inverted seventh chords must be complete (i.e., have all chord tones).
5. All triads must contain at least three voices.
6. All seventh chords must contain at least four voices.
7. The final chord must include a correctly spelled 4—3 suspension.

B. Award 0 points for a chord that breaks one or more of the conditions of **II.A.**

N.B.: Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of these chords. (See **III.E.**)

C. Award ½ point each for a correctly realized chord that has exactly one of the following errors:

1. A doubled leading tone, a doubled chordal seventh, or incorrect doubling of a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord.
2. More than one octave between adjacent upper parts.
3. Crossed voices.

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D. Award 0 points for a correctly realized chord that has any of the following:

N.B.: *Do* check the voice leading into and out of these chords.

1. Two or more errors listed in **II.C.** (e.g., double leading tone and spacing error, or two spacing errors)
2. The correct accidental on the wrong side of a notehead. (For an incorrect accidental on the wrong side of a notehead, see **II.A.1.**)

III. Voice Leading

A. Award 2 points for acceptable voice leading between two correctly realized chords. **2 points per chord connection (12 max)**

N.B.: This includes the voice leading from the given chord to the second chord.

B. If all chords are correctly realized, and there are no voice-leading errors (as described in **III.C.** and **III.D.**), but the response has excessive leaps within the upper three voices:

1. Award 12 points for voice leading if there are six or fewer leaps in the three upper voices combined.
2. Award 11 points for voice leading if there are more than six leaps in the three upper voices combined.

C. Award only 1 point for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **II.A.**) with exactly one of the following errors:

1. Uncharacteristic rising unequal fifths. (See *DCVLE*, no. 4.)
2. Uncharacteristic hidden (covered) or direct octaves or fifths between outer voices. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 5 and 6.)
3. Overlapping voices. (See *DCVLE*, no. 7.)
4. A chordal seventh approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.
5. The fourth of a cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ (i.e., $\hat{1}$) approached by a descending leap of a fourth or larger.

D. Award 0 points for voice leading between two correctly realized chords (as defined in **II.A.**) if any of the following statements is true:

1. Parallel octaves, fifths, or unisons occur (immediately successive or beat-to-beat), including those by contrary motion. (See *DCVLE*, nos. 1 through 3.)
2. An uncharacteristic leap occurs (e.g., augmented second, tritone, or more than a fifth).
3. A chordal seventh is unresolved or resolved incorrectly. (The voice with the seventh should move down by step if possible. In some cases, such as ii^7 to cadential $\frac{6}{4}$, the seventh will be retained in the same voice. The seventh may move UP by step only in the case of the $\text{i}–\text{V}^4_3–\text{i}^6$ progression.)
4. The leading tone in an outer voice is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.
5. The 6th or 4th of the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ chord is unresolved or resolved incorrectly.
6. At least one of the chords has more or fewer than four voices (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass).
7. The suspension is not prepared.

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8. More than one error listed in section **III.C.** occurs.

E. Award 0 points for voice leading into and out of an incorrectly realized chord.

IV. Scores with Additional Meaning

1 This score can be given to a response that has two or more redeeming qualities.

0 This score is used for a response that represents an unsuccessful attempt to answer the question (has no redeeming qualities, or only one) or a response that is off-topic or irrelevant.

NR Reserved for blank responses

V. Scoring Notes

A. Do not penalize a response that includes correctly used nonchord tones.

B. An incorrectly used nonchord tone will be considered a voice-leading error.

1. Award 1 point if the incorrect nonchord tone results in one error listed in **III.C.**
2. Award 0 points if the incorrect nonchord tone results in at least one error from **III.D.** or more than one error from **III.C.**

C. Half-point totals round up with one exception: A total score of 24½ rounds down to 24.

Total for question 5 25 points

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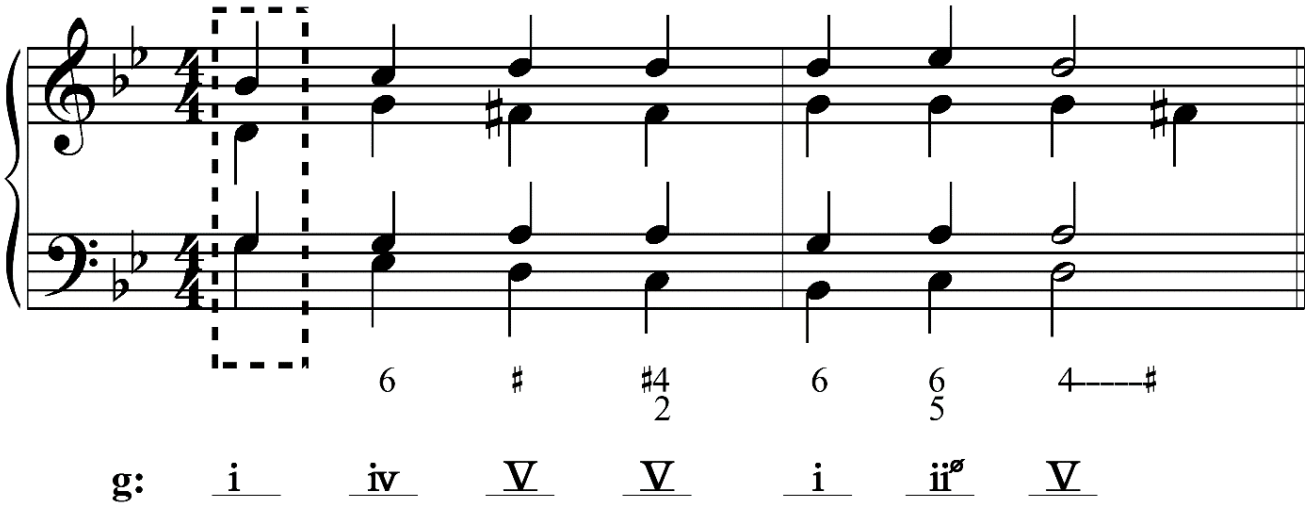
Record points for chord spelling, spacing, and doubling in row 1, for voice leading between chords in row 2, and for Roman numeral analysis in row 3.

One possible 25-point answer (others are possible):



Chord spelling:							
Voice leading:							
Roman numeral:							

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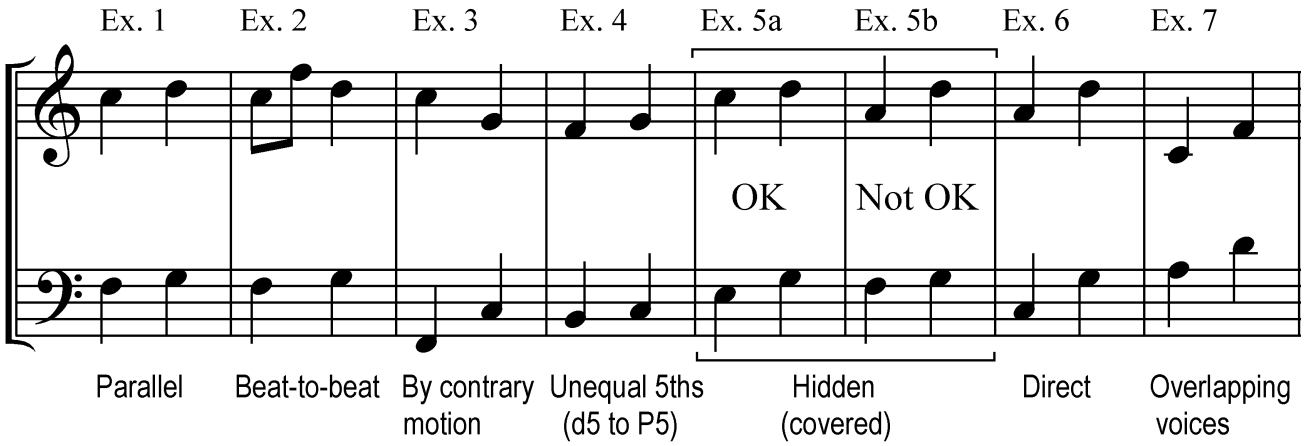
Definitions of Common Voice-Leading Errors (DCVLE)



1. Parallel fifths and octaves (immediately consecutive): unacceptable (award 0 points).

2. Beat-to-beat fifths and octaves (equal perfect intervals on successive beats): unacceptable (award 0 points).

3. Fifths and octaves by contrary motion: unacceptable (award 0 points).

4. Unequal fifths

   d5→ P5 (by step):

   - An ascending d5→ P5 is acceptable ONLY between upper voices when passing between I and I^6, e.g., $I–V^4_3–I^6$ and $I–vii^{o6}–I^6$ (no deduction).
   - An ascending d5→ P5 in other situations is unacceptable (award 1 point only).
   - A descending d5→ P5 is acceptable between upper voices (no deduction).
   - Any d5→ P5 (ascending or descending) between the bass and an upper voice is unacceptable (award 1 point only).

   P5→ d5 (by step):

   - An ascending P5→ d5 between two upper voices is acceptable (no deduction).
   - A descending P5→ d5 between two upper voices is acceptable (no deduction).

5. Hidden (or covered) fifths and octaves in outer voices (similar motion to a perfect interval that involves one voice moving by step).

   - When the step is in the upper voice, as shown in Ex. 5a: acceptable (no deduction).
   - When the step is in the lower voice, as shown in Ex. 5b: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

6. Direct fifths and octaves in outer voices: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

   Definition: Similar motion to a perfect interval that involves a skip in each voice. N.B.: Many sources equate “hidden” and “direct.”

7. Overlapping voices: unacceptable (award 1 point only).

   Definition: Two voices move to a position in which the lower voice is higher than the previous note in the higher voice, or they move to a position where the higher voice is lower than the previous note in the lower voice.

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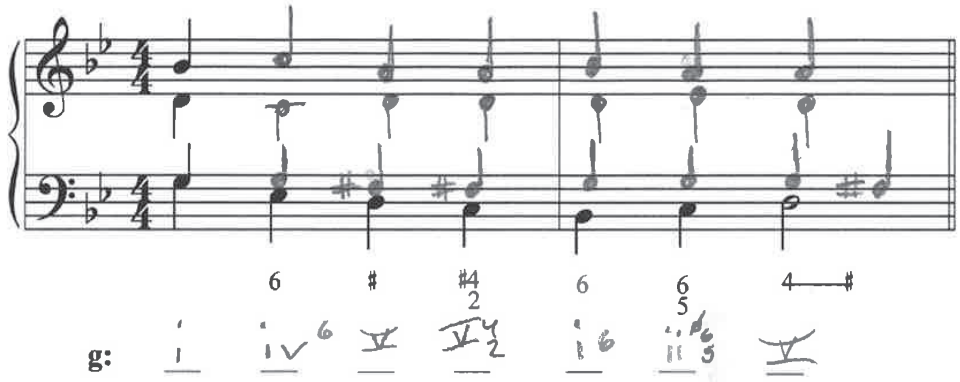
Write your response to QUESTION 5 on this page.

Question 5. (Suggested time—15 minutes)

Realize the figured bass below in four voices, following traditional eighteenth-century voice-leading procedures. Continue logically from the spacing of the first chord. Do not add embellishments unless indicated by the figured bass. Prepare and resolve the nonharmonic tone as a suspension. On the blank below each chord, write the Roman numeral that appropriately indicates harmonic function.



GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

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g: i | iv6 | V | V 4 2 | i 6 | ii 6 5 | V

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

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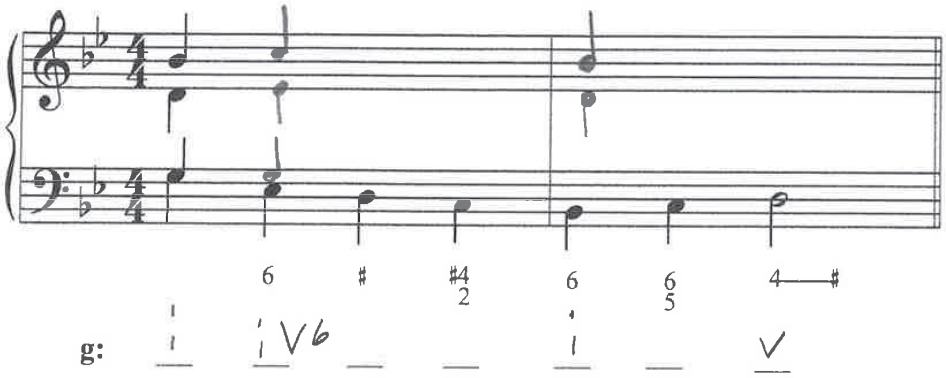

Question 5

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

This question assessed students' ability to:

- realize a figured bass progression in Common Practice style in four voices;
- employ smooth voice-leading procedures;
- demonstrate understanding of diatonic harmony, including chord spelling, spacing, doubling, and voice leading in a four-part texture;
- analyze chords using Roman numerals;
- spell chords in a minor key, including raising the leading tone in the dominant chord;
- notate a half cadence; and
- notate a 4–3 suspension, including its proper preparation and resolution.

Sample: 5A
Score: 24

This represents an excellent response. All Roman numerals are correct and all chords are spelled correctly. Voice leading is correct between all chords, except between chords two and three, which contains a direct fifth in the outer voices. (Roman numerals: 7; Chord spelling: 6; Voice leading: 11; Total = 24)

Sample: 5B
Score: 14

This represents a fair response. Chords 2, 5, and 6 are spelled correctly. Three points were awarded for chord spelling. All Roman numerals are correct. Chords three and four are spelled incorrectly; 0 points were awarded for chord spelling or voice leading into and out of these chords. Chord seven is also incorrect; 0 points were awarded for chord spelling or voice leading into this chord. The voice leading between chords one and two and between chords five and six is correct. (Roman numerals: 7; Chord spelling: 3; Voice leading: 4; Total = 14)

Sample: 5C
Score: 7

This represents a weak response. Four Roman numerals are correct; 4 points were awarded. Chord two is correctly spelled and was awarded 1 point. Chords three, four, six, and seven were not attempted. Chord five has only three voices, and not all members of the inverted triad are present; 0 points were awarded for voice-leading connections into and out of these chords. The voice leading between chords one and two is correct; 2 points were awarded for this voice-leading connection. (Roman numerals: 4; Chord spelling: 1; Voice leading: 2; Total = 7)

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